





he Miami Braille Project, established in May 2008 at the Miami Correctional Facility, Indiana, is a collaborative venture between the Indiana Department of Correction / PEN Products, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), Center for Exceptional Learners, and the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired / Indiana Educational Resource Center. The Miami Braille Project has been renamed the Miami Accessible Media Project (MAMP).

The goal of the project is to provide low-cost, quality braille textbooks to Indiana's school age children in grades K - 12, in a timely and efficient manner, while providing a skill to the offenders at the Miami Correctional Facility that will increase employment opportunities, thus reducing recidivism. To ensure a consistent pool of trained transcribers, a process has been put into practice to identify and train new offenders, on-going, to replace those who are up for release. In an effort to reduce recidivism, the project is examining ways to assist exiting trained offenders to start-up their own businesses if they choose to do so upon release.

Currently, the Miami collaboration is in the process of implementing an "accessible formats" workflow for the Spring of 2010 that will be expanded to include large print, accessible PDF and BRF files. The Project will utilize a unique, versatile production workflow that diversifies the existing braille operation by consolidating it with a new large print operation at their common points. This leads to a substantial return on investment, as some duplication of effort can be eliminated between what normally would be two different workflows.

The workflow incorporates files from the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) and other publisher files. In addition to production time savings, this process allows the SEA (State Educational Agencies) and its LEA's (Local Educational Agencies) to comply with the "timely manner" requirement of the NIMAS (National Instructional Material Accessibility Standards) regulations and the Indiana Special Education Rules (Article 7). The production process provides improvements in both the speed of the process, the quality and consistency of books converted, and the flexibility of the system to produce four specialized formats (digital braille, hard copy braille, hard copy large print, and accessible PDF files) instead of the two traditional formats (hard copy braille and hard copy large print). It also provides for a mechanism to provide a smaller, more portable size 16 to 18 point large print textbook in addition to the larger print format. It is the goal of the collaboration to provide specialized formats that will assist in removing the limitations of print technology barriers for students with visual impairments and provide access that is timely and content that is consistent with print versions of the textbook.

The specialized formats will be available through the statewide ICAM (Indiana Center for Accessible Materials) system. It is hoped that the accessible PDF files ultimately created through the integrated workflow, will benefit not only students with visual impairments, but all print disabled students, providing additional accessible formats without additional cost. It is anticipated that an increase in usable, digital large print options will help lower the demand for hard copy large print, which is more costly to produce, maintain and distribute then digital media. This also meets with the goal of the IDOE to move to the increased use of digital instructional materials.